

REMARKS

The Office Action in the above-identified application has been carefully considered and this amendment has been presented to place this application in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, reexamination and reconsideration of this application are respectfully requested.

Claims 1–20 are in the present application. It is submitted that these claims are patentably distinct over the prior art cited by the Examiner, and that these claims are in full compliance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112.

The drawings were objected to because Figures 3-12 were not labeled as being —PRIOR ART—. In response, Applicants respectfully submit the attached replacement drawing sheets, containing Figures 3-12, which add—PRIOR ART— labels to each figure. Accordingly, Applicants believe this objection has been overcome.

The Abstract was objected to for improper language and format. In response, Applicants have submitted a new Abstract. Accordingly, Applicants believe this objection has been overcome.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication by the Examiner that claim 9-20 are allowed and that claims 5-7 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. However, for the reasons discussed below, Applicants traverse the rejection of base claim 1 and therefore have not amended claims 5-7.

Claims 1 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schorman et al. (U.S. Patent 5,157,728) in view of Unno et al. (U.S. Patent 6,076,063).

The present invention “delimit[s] a reproduction input sound signal obtained by reproducing, from a recording medium, a sound signal recorded on the recording medium at a speed higher than a normal speed into successive processing unit periods.” (Claim 1) When the amplitude suppression process is performed, successive sounds are delimited by a period of time within which there is little or no sound. (Specification pages 34-35) In other words, the signal is broken down into processing units containing audible sounds. The Examiner asserts Schorman’s sampling of an analog signal when converting to a digital signal meets the present delimiting step. (Office Action page 4; Schorman Column 2, Lines 14-15) However, as shown in Figure 2, the present delimiting step is performed in one of the sections (70, 21, 22, and 23) prior to the output buffer 24, which precedes the present invention’s own sampling by D/A converter 25. Accordingly, Schorman’s D/A sampling is analogous to the present invention’s D/A sampling and hence cannot meet the present invention’s delimiting step.

A key aspect of the present invention is that the sound signal can be reproduced from “the recording medium at a speed higher than a normal speed.” (Claim 1) In other words, the recorded sound signal is played at a higher speed and is not distorted, as opposed to being copied at a higher speed. The Examiner asserts “Unno et al. discloses a sound recording system teaching that data can be stored at a higher speed than when recorded which is convenient for rapid copying (Column 8, Lines 34-36).” However, Unno’s disclosures is only applicable to copying a digital signal at a higher speed and not for reproducing (i.e. playing back) an analog

signal at a higher speed; in which case, Unno suffers from the same prior art problems which the present invention solves.

Furthermore, the present claims recite the step of “partly deleting, if a sound presence portion or portions of an amount which cannot be stored into said output buffer are included in the reproduction input sound signal of any of the processing unit periods, the sound presence portion or portions to join sound presence portions which precede and follow the sound absence portion or portions and compressing the reproduction input sound signal of the processing unit period to obtain a compressed reproduction input sound signal of the processing unit period.”

(Claim 1) In other words, if the signal does not have enough absence portions which can be deleted to allow for the higher speed reproduction, then some of the sound presence portions can be partially deleted and compressed. The Examiner contends Schorman’s predetermined criteria for removing data (Column 3, Lines 26-36) meets this partly deleting and compressing limitation. However, Schorman only discloses deleting pauses (i.e. absence portions) and repetitive portions as at the cited location. Accordingly, Schorman does not disclose either partially deleting or compressing sound presence portions.

Therefore, for at least these reasons, Schorman and Unno fail to render obvious the present invention and claims 1 and 4 should be allowed.

Claims 2 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schorman in view of Suzuki (U.S. Patent 6,169,240). Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schorman in view of Li et al. (U.S. Patent 6,310,652). Suzuki and Li are relied on solely to meet limitations recited in the dependent claims. Accordingly, the

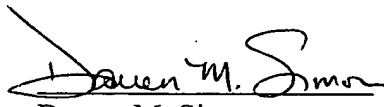
combination of Schorman with either Suzuki or Li fails to obviate the present invention for the reasons discussed hereinabove and the rejected claims should be allowed..

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application as now presented is in condition for allowance. Early and favorable reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested.

No fees are deemed to be required for the filing of this amendment, but if such are, the Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any insufficient fees or credit any overpayment associated with the above-identified application to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

If any issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions, he/she is invited to call the undersigned at the telephone number provided below. The Examiner's consideration of this matter is gratefully acknowledged.

Respectfully submitted,
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